

MENZIES INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

POLICY SUMMARY FOR STUDENTS

MITP22 - Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure

VERSION: 9

LAST REVIEWED: 2025

NEXT REVIEW: Annual review and updates as required

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

This policy establishes Menzies' commitment to preventing and responding to sexual harassment. We are dedicated to creating a safe, respectful learning environment free from sexual harassment for all students, staff, and visitors. This policy outlines clear procedures for reporting, responding to, and preventing sexual harassment, ensuring that everyone understands their rights, responsibilities, and available support services.

KEY SECTIONS OF THE POLICY

1. Prohibited Conduct

Sexual harassment includes any unwanted, unwelcome, or uninvited behaviour of a sexual nature that makes someone feel humiliated, intimidated, or offended. This can be physical (unwanted touching), verbal (sexual comments or jokes), visual (displaying explicit materials), or technology-facilitated (sending explicit messages or images). Sexual harassment does not require intent or repetition to be a violation.

2. Positive Duty and Prevention

Menzies has a positive duty to proactively prevent sexual harassment through leadership commitment, risk assessment, training and education, and creating a culture of respect. We don't just respond to incidents—we work to prevent them from occurring through regular training, awareness campaigns, and addressing risk factors.

3. Reporting Options and Support

Multiple confidential reporting pathways are available including Sexual Harassment Contact Officers, Student Services, online reporting portals, and external agencies. You can report formally, informally, or anonymously. Immediate support services include counselling, safety planning, and academic or workplace adjustments.

4. Response Procedures

All reports are taken seriously and handled promptly, confidentially, and with trauma-informed approaches. Response options include informal resolution (when appropriate and with consent), formal investigation, or external investigation. Throughout any process, your safety, wellbeing, and choice are prioritized.

5. Cultural Safety and Inclusion

Special consideration is given to cultural safety for First Nations peoples and inclusivity for all diverse communities. Support services are trauma-informed and culturally appropriate, recognizing that sexual harassment can affect different individuals and communities in different ways.

UNDERSTANDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

What Is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment is unwanted or unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature. It can include physical conduct (unwanted touching, sexual assault), verbal conduct (sexual comments, propositions), visual conduct (displaying explicit materials, inappropriate staring), technology-facilitated conduct (cyberstalking, sharing intimate images without consent), or power-based conduct (conditioning benefits on sexual favours).

What Sexual Harassment Is NOT

Mutual attraction, consensual relationships, or appropriate compliments given respectfully do not constitute sexual harassment. However, consent must always be freely given, ongoing, and can be withdrawn at any time.

Why This Policy Matters

Sexual harassment is a serious breach of human rights, a form of discrimination, and a health and safety issue. It can cause significant psychological and physical harm. Everyone deserves to study in an environment where they feel safe, respected, and valued.

HOW TO REPORT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

- **Step 1: Know Your Reporting Options**

You have multiple ways to report sexual harassment. You can speak with a Sexual Harassment Contact Officer (Student Services Officers or CEO), report online through our confidential portal (available 24/7), speak with any trusted staff member, report anonymously, or contact external agencies like 1800RESPECT or Victoria Police.

- **Step 2: Choose What Feels Right for You**

You can make a formal report (triggers investigation process), an informal report (seeks resolution without formal investigation), or an anonymous report (provides information without identifying yourself). You're in control of the process, and you can change your mind about how you want to proceed.

- **Step 3: What Happens When You Report**

When you report, you'll be connected with a trained Sexual Harassment Contact Officer who will listen to you, explain your options, connect you with support services, respect your choices about how to proceed, and maintain confidentiality (information shared only with those who need to know for your safety and to address the situation).

- **Step 4: Getting Support**

Immediate support is available regardless of whether you make a formal report. This includes confidential counselling, safety planning and protective measures, academic adjustments if needed, ongoing check-ins and support, and referrals to external specialist services like 1800RESPECT.

- **Step 5: Investigation Process (if you choose formal action)**

If you choose to make a formal complaint, the process includes: initial assessment and support provision, investigation by trained personnel (can be internal or external), opportunity for you to provide your account, procedural fairness for all parties, determination of outcomes based on evidence, and implementation of appropriate actions or consequences.

KEY POINTS FOR STUDENTS

- ✓ Sexual harassment is NEVER acceptable and is NEVER your fault
- ✓ You have the right to study in an environment free from sexual harassment
- ✓ Multiple confidential reporting options are available - choose what feels right for you
- ✓ Support services are available immediately, regardless of whether you make a formal report
- ✓ You're in control - you decide how you want to proceed and can change your mind

- ✓ Reports are taken seriously and handled with confidentiality, sensitivity, and trauma-informed approaches
- ✓ Retaliation or victimization for making a report is strictly prohibited
- ✓ External reporting options are always available (police, Human Rights Commission, etc.)

TYPES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Physical Sexual Harassment

Includes unwanted touching, embracing, kissing, fondling, sexual assault, blocking someone's path in an intimidating way, or unwanted physical proximity. Physical sexual harassment is the most serious form and may also constitute criminal offences.

Verbal Sexual Harassment

Includes sexual comments or jokes, unwanted invitations for dates or sexual encounters, comments about someone's body or appearance, threats of sexual violence, or use of sexually degrading language.

Visual and Written Sexual Harassment

Includes displaying sexually explicit materials, sending explicit images or videos, sexual graffiti, inappropriate staring or leering, or exposing oneself indecently.

Technology-Facilitated Sexual Harassment

Includes cyberstalking, sharing intimate images without consent (image-based sexual abuse), creating fake social media profiles for harassment, sexual harassment in online learning environments, or unwanted sexual messages via any digital platform.

Power-Based Sexual Harassment

Includes quid pro quo harassment (conditioning academic benefits on sexual favours) or abuse of authority for sexual purposes. This is particularly serious as it involves misuse of power or position.

SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE

Internal Support Services

Confidential counselling services, academic adjustments (extensions, alternative assessment arrangements), safety planning and interim protective measures, peer support programs, and Student Services support throughout any process.

External Support Services

- • 1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732 (24/7 national sexual assault, domestic violence counselling)
- • Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24/7 crisis support)
- • Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636 (mental health support)
- • Victoria Police: 000 (emergencies) or local station for non-emergencies
- • Australian Human Rights Commission: Complaint line for discrimination matters

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE PROCESS

Confidentiality

Information is shared only with people who have a legitimate need to know. This typically includes: the Sexual Harassment Contact Officer handling your case, relevant support service providers (with your consent), investigators if formal investigation proceeds, senior management if required for decision-making, and external agencies if you choose to involve them or if legally required.

Timeframes

Initial response and support provision occurs immediately. Formal investigations typically take 30-60 days depending on complexity. You'll be kept informed throughout the process about timeframes and progress.

Your Rights Throughout

You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, to have your report taken seriously, to access support services, to be informed about the process and outcomes, to be protected from victimization or retaliation, to appeal decisions you believe are unfair, and to seek external review if unsatisfied with internal processes.

Possible Outcomes

Outcomes may include: education and training requirements for respondent, formal warnings, supervision or monitoring arrangements, no-contact directives, changes to class or work arrangements, suspension or exclusion from campus or activities, or termination of enrolment for serious breaches. The goal is to stop the harassment, support you, and ensure it doesn't happen again.

PREVENTION AND TRAINING

Mandatory Training

All staff complete sexual harassment prevention training during induction and annually. All students receive sexual harassment awareness information during orientation. Managers and supervisors receive specialized training on responding to reports. Sexual Harassment Contact Officers receive trauma-informed response training.

Awareness and Prevention

Regular campus awareness campaigns, clear communication about expectations and values, promotion of a culture of respect and consent, addressing risk factors proactively, and bystander intervention training.

Creating Safe Spaces

We actively work to create safe, inclusive learning environments through: visible commitment from leadership, clear policies and procedures, accessible reporting options, prompt and appropriate responses to incidents, and ongoing education and awareness.

BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

If You Witness Sexual Harassment

You can help by: safely intervening if you feel able (distract, redirect, or directly address if safe), supporting the person affected (check if they're okay, offer to accompany them to support services), reporting what you observed (even if the person doesn't want to report themselves, you can share concerns), and documenting what happened (dates, times, what you observed).

When to Intervene Directly

Only intervene directly if it's safe to do so. You can: distract the situation (create an interruption), delegate (get someone with authority involved), or direct (clearly state the behavior is inappropriate). Never put yourself at risk.

When to Seek Help

If you're unsure how to help, if the situation is escalating, if you feel unsafe, or if the person affected needs more support than you can provide, contact a Sexual Harassment Contact Officer, Student Services, or emergency services (000) if there's immediate danger.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

International Students

International students have the same rights and access to support as all students. Cultural differences are respected and considered. Information about Australian laws and norms is provided. Visa implications of reporting are explained clearly.

First Nations Students

Cultural safety is prioritized in all responses. Specialized support services are available. Traditional healing and support practices are respected and accommodated where possible.

Students with Disability

Accessible reporting options and communication methods are provided. Support services are adapted to individual needs. Reasonable adjustments are implemented throughout any process.

LGBTIQA+ Students

Identity-affirming support services are available. Specific risks and impacts on LGBTIQA+ individuals are recognized and addressed. Specialist referrals available when needed.

FALSE OR MALICIOUS REPORTS

Understanding False Reports

Genuine reports made in good faith are protected, even if investigation doesn't substantiate them. False or malicious reports (made knowingly with intent to harm) are taken seriously and may result in disciplinary action.

Protection for Genuine Reporters

Making a report in good faith is never a breach of policy, even if the investigation determines harassment didn't occur. We distinguish between unsubstantiated reports (insufficient evidence) and false reports (deliberately false).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Privacy and Confidentiality

All information is handled in accordance with MITP33 Privacy Policy and Procedure. Records are stored securely with restricted access. Information is only disclosed when necessary for investigation, support, or legal requirements.

Integration with Other Policies

This policy operates alongside: MITP21 Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy, MITP07 Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure, MITP04 Student Code of Conduct, MITP33 Privacy Policy and Procedure, MITP20 Health and Safety Policy and Procedure, and MITP14 Critical Incident Policy and Procedure.

Record Keeping

Records of complaints are maintained for minimum of 7 years in secure, confidential storage. Records are used for continuous improvement and to identify patterns or systemic issues. All records comply with privacy legislation.

Continuous Improvement

We regularly review and improve our prevention and response approaches based on: incident data and trends, feedback from students and staff, changes in legislation or best practice, external reviews and audits, and benchmarking against sector standards.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Sexual Harassment Contact Officers

For Students:

Student Services Officer: 1300 244 002, academics@menzies.vic.edu.au

For Staff:

CEO/Principal Executive Officer, 1300 244 002, sam@menzies.vic.edu.au

External Support Services:

1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732 (24/7)

Lifeline: 13 11 14 (24/7)

Victoria Police: 000 (emergencies)

Australian Human Rights Commission: www.humanrights.gov.au

RELATED POLICIES

You may also want to read these related policies:

- • MITP21 - Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy and Procedure
- • MITP07 - Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- • MITP04 - Student Code of Conduct
- • MITP33 - Privacy Policy and Procedure
- • MITP20 - Health and Safety Policy and Procedure
- • MITP28 - Student Support Services and Welfare Policy and Procedure

This is a summary only. The full MITP22 Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure contains detailed procedures and responsibilities. You can request the full policy from Student Services.